

Corporate Blogging Goes Mainstream

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Becoming fully incorporated into media and marketing

Blogging has been around for well over a decade—an eternity in internet time. Whereas blogs used to be a thorn in the side of traditional journalism, today they’re an essential ingredient in the media mix.

Hardly a news organization exists that does not have a blog where its journalists post updates to breaking stories, offer personal commentary and engage in a dialogue with readers and viewers.

Similarly, blogging has grown into a vital marketing tool for all types of companies, including Fortune 500 marketers and mom-and-pop retailers.

eMarketer estimates that 34% of US companies will use a blog for marketing purposes this year, a proportion that will continue to grow to 43% by 2012.

“Businesses are increasingly using the blogosphere to further a variety of corporate functions, such as communications, lead generation, customer service and brand marketing,” said Paul Verna, eMarketer senior analyst and author of the new report “Corporate Blogging: Media and Marketing Firms Drive Growth.”

While blogging still tends not to rate such high usage as newer forms of social media like Facebook and Twitter, it still has many strengths, including full control over branding and advertising, integration with all corporate web properties, no limits on post length and the existence of a full, easily searchable repository of information. And studies have noted blogging’s usefulness for lead generation.

In addition to marketing, blogs have also become more fully integrated into the world of communications. In the early days of blogging, the established media showed a definite distrust of such nontraditional publishing.

By October 2009, according to a Cision-led study, nearly two-thirds of US journalists reported they used blogs to publish, promote and distribute what they wrote.

And according to PRWeek and PR Newswire, about a third of journalists used corporate blogs as research sources in 2010, up from a quarter last year.

“This confluence between established and emerging media is making blogging an integral part of the news cycle,” said Verna. “As consumers assimilate blogs into their media consumption, they are less likely to distinguish between a blog and a traditional news outlet.”

The full report, “Corporate Blogging: Media and Marketing Firms Drive Growth,” also answers these key questions:

- * How are companies using blogs for marketing, communications, sales and other functions?
- * How much do companies value blogs compared with other marketing tools?
- * What is the relationship between blogging and the mainstream media?

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